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Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifty-sixth session

Draft report

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Addendum

Proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019
(*Item 3 (b) (ii)*)

Programme 25
Management and support services

1. At its 8th meeting, on 3 June 2016, the Committee considered programme 25, Management and support services, of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019 (A/71/6 (Prog. 25)/Rev.1). The Committee also had before it a note by the Secretariat on the proposed strategic framework, contained in conference room paper E/AC.51/2016/CRP.1/Rev.1.

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Management introduced the programme and, together with other management officials, responded to queries raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

3. Delegations noted that the original report had been replaced at short notice by a revised version thereof. General support for the overall objectives of the programme was expressed, and the important role it played in providing critical support and services in the delivery of the programme of work of the Organization was acknowledged. Appreciation for the effective and efficient financial, human resources, support, and information and communications technology services provided by the Secretariat and offices away from Headquarters was emphasized. The adaptation of the indicators of achievement to bring them into line with the results-based-budgeting format was welcomed.

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4. Delegations noted that several transformative and interlinked initiatives were under way, and sought further information on the key risks associated with their delivery, on how continuity would be ensured in the light of the upcoming change in leadership of the Organization and on how delivery would be effectively monitored to ensure the desired impact.

5. The view was expressed that no new initiatives should be implemented by the Secretariat without prior approval by Member States, owing in part to the difficulties faced by the Secretariat in implementing multiple initiatives simultaneously. In this regard, the challenges and lack of tangible benefits of existing initiatives were highlighted, for example, the difficulties linked with the implementation of Umoja, the global field support strategy and the global service delivery model. The need for the Department of Management to show improvements in terms of efficiencies and effectiveness was underlined. Additionally, the need for departments and offices to ensure that there would be no duplication or overlapping of efforts was emphasized, as well as the need for initiatives to be accompanied by benefits realization.

6. The continued focus on resources and risk management and on improving accountability and effectiveness was welcomed, although note was taken that a more rigorous approach to both could still be adopted. Intentions to modernize human resources management policies, in particular with respect to workforce planning and performance management, were welcomed.

7. Concerns were expressed with respect to ensuring consistency in the policies and continuity into the next biennium during the transition in leadership, and how that would be implemented by the new Secretary-General.

8. Clarifications were sought on the status of the implementation of the new compensation package as recommended by the International Civil Service Commission and approved by the General Assembly, including changes to Umoja and human resources policies, in view of the resistance demonstrated by certain entities in the Secretariat.

9. Concerns were expressed regarding the structural changes in the strategic frameworks, such as the removal of components from subprogramme 2, Programme planning, budget and accounts, and the variable results achieved as a result, and clarification was sought regarding the background of the proposed changes.

10. With regard to subprogramme 1, Management services, administration of justice and services to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly and to the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in particular component 1, Management services, clarification was sought regarding the mandate of the activities to strengthen and expand services to Member States, as outlined in paragraph 25.17 of the strategy. Further, it was recalled that the Award Review Board (ibid., para. 25.18) had been established on an experimental basis by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/269, and in that regard clarification was sought as to why the word "experimental" had been removed from the language in the proposed strategic framework. Concerns were expressed regarding the difficulties experienced in terms of the deployment of the enterprise resource planning project (Umoja), notably Umoja Extension 2. Views were expressed to the effect that the strategic framework under component 2, Enterprise resource planning project, could have indicators of achievement of better quality. In addition, the

absence of a reference under component 3, Management evaluation component of the administration of justice, to the review by an independent panel of the United Nations internal system of justice, which would be presented to the Assembly at the main part of its seventy-first session, was noted. Ensuring a fit-for-purpose system of justice was considered to be an objective shared by Member States, the Secretary-General and staff. Under component 4, Services to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly and to the Committee for Programme and Coordination, some delegations expressed concern regarding the overlap of the work of both Committees and the impact of this overlap on the services provided by the Secretariat, and sought clarification. A delegation noted that the issues raised were not within the purview of the Secretariat but in the hands of Members States, which could deliberate and find solutions including through the appropriate forum of the Committee on Conferences.

11. With regard to subprogramme 2, Programme planning, budget and accounts, clarification was sought on indicator of achievement (a) (i) of component 1, Programme planning and budgeting, with regard to how this indicator would be measured. Additional clarifications were also sought on expected accomplishment (b), "Increased utilization of resources by departments", of component 3, Accounting, contributions and financial reporting.

12. With regard to subprogramme 3, Human resources management, concerns were expressed regarding the issues of equitable geographical distribution, underrepresentation and gender balance at all levels in the Secretariat, with an emphasis on the senior levels. Concerns were also expressed regarding the inverted pyramid structure of the Secretariat, which functioned to the detriment of qualified junior and technical staff, and efforts to reverse this trend were encouraged. Further outreach for underrepresented and unrepresented countries in the recruitment process for the young professionals programme, including placement and retention, was encouraged. In that regard, delegations underlined the importance of establishing clear indicators of achievement so as to draw conclusions on the performance of the Secretariat in that regard. Concerns were also expressed regarding the measure of the time period between vacancy announcement and selection, and it was suggested that the time from vacancy announcement to deployment be used instead. Under component 1, Policy, delegations observed that the Organization had failed to reduce the number of appeals and disciplinary cases and such a reduction was proposed as an indicator of achievement.

13. With regard to subprogramme 4, Support services, the inclusion in the strategy of a reference to "flexible workplace strategies" was questioned, since the project had been suspended after it had not been approved by the General Assembly at the main part of its seventieth session. In that regard, some delegations recalled that other initiatives, such as the capital master plan (ibid., para. 25.12), had been very costly for the Organization, and expressed reservations with respect to undertaking new, large and costly construction projects at Headquarters or other duty stations, such as Geneva and Arusha, so soon after previous projects had been finalized, underlining that the importance of these projects turned them into strategies in themselves. Some delegations expressed the view that staff had not been sufficiently consulted prior to the implementation of the strategy. Other delegations expressed the view that extensive consultations had taken place. Some delegations welcomed the continued attempts to consolidate staff in New York into as few buildings as possible, thereby creating efficiencies while also helping to increase cooperation

and productivity through the continued implementation of a flexible workplace solution. The same approach was encouraged in Geneva, as reflected in the resolutions of the Assembly. The Office of Central Support Services was encouraged to continue to provide oversight on capital projects at overseas duty stations. Furthermore, the question was raised as to whether there were clear guidelines for the use of meeting rooms by Member States and the basis for charging Member States for such use. Clarification was sought with regard to the mandate to promote "environmental sustainability" contained in paragraph 25.64 (c).

14. With respect to component 2, Procurement services, of subprogramme 4, the importance of transparency, effectiveness and competition in procurement was stressed, including ensuring access for vendors of different geographical and linguistic backgrounds, with an emphasis on non-Anglophone countries and the global South. References to the budgeting process and procurement were welcomed, and the full implementation of related General Assembly resolutions, such as resolution 69/273 on procurement and resolutions on recosting, was encouraged. The view was expressed that the basic principles for the registration of new suppliers and the awarding of procurement contracts should be in line with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, and that no changes to the working methods in that regard should be made without Member State approval.

15. With regard to subprogramme 5, Information and communications technology strategic management and coordination, clarification was sought regarding the strategy reflected in paragraph 25.52 (e), relating to the transition of information and communications technology contracts to global enterprise agreements to support the global Secretariat. Concerns were raised regarding the support being provided to Member States under component 2, Alignment of technology with the work of the United Nations Secretariat, in particular modernized information technology infrastructure, equipment and improved accessibility to printing services.

16. With regard to subprogramme 6, Information and communications technology operations, clarifications were sought regarding where the data centres mentioned in the expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement for component 1, Enterprise hosting, would be located, including the criteria that would be used to determine their location, and details on how the transfer would be made. Questions were raised regarding component 4, Mainstreaming Umoja, as to whether the Secretariat intended to create a separate unit or mechanism to continually evaluate and improve Umoja's ability to evolve and whether the structure would be created within the framework of a specific mandate. In that regard, the upcoming biennium was considered critical, as Umoja stabilized and became part of the Organization's business-as-usual approach and as both the United Nations and Member States expected benefits from its implementation. Delegations noted that the indicators of achievement did not objectively define the scope of a "successful" implementation of Umoja and should be further refined.

17. With regard to subprogramme 4, Support services, of part B, United Nations Office at Geneva, clarifications were sought as to why the strategic heritage plan had not been reflected in the strategic framework of the subprogramme.

Conclusions and recommendations

18. The Committee noted from the overall orientation of programme 25 the intention of the Secretary-General to implement key management reform measures, recalled General Assembly resolutions 69/272 and 70/255 on the accountability system in the Secretariat and noted with appreciation the efforts of the Department of Management to strengthen institutional and senior managerial accountability in order to ensure a more effective and results-oriented Organization.

19. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of programme 25, Management and support services, of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2018-2019, subject to the following modifications:

Overall orientation

Paragraph 25.7

Replace the second sentence with "The Department will ensure that the project adequately responds to the needs of the Organization and facilitates the execution of its mandates. The Department will ensure the completion and stabilization of Umoja Extension 2, the adoption of the Umoja solution, mainstreaming and enhancing support management and addressing emerging needs that are critical to sustaining operations."

Paragraph 25.12

Replace the first sentence with "The Department of Management, through the Office for Central Support Services, will fully operate the renovated Headquarters complex following the capital master plan, including comprehensive servicing of the technological and design upgrades so that the complex is utilized and maintained in the most efficient and effective manner."

In the second sentence, delete "continue to implement flexible workspace strategies in New York and".

Before the last sentence, add "In particular, the Department will continue to implement a global perspective in the planning and prioritization of capital and facilities expenditure as well as in strategies for managing office space at Headquarters."

Paragraph 25.14

In the first sentence, add ", 70/255" after "69/262".

Paragraph 25.16

Replace the second sentence with "By partnering with other organizations of the system, it will strengthen existing common and joint services while ensuring more efficient and cost-effective existing arrangements."

A. Headquarters

Subprogramme 1
Management services, administration of justice and services to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly and to the Committee for Programme and Coordination

Component 2
Enterprise resource planning project

Indicators of achievement

In indicator of achievement (a) (ii), replace "built and tested" with "built, tested and stabilized".

Subprogramme 2
Programme planning, budget and accounts

Component 1
Programme planning and budgeting

Objective of the Organization

Replace the objective of the Organization with "To ensure the effective and efficient formulation of the biennial programme plan, in order to secure its approval and the resources required for the financing of the mandated programmes and activities of the Secretariat and to ensure the efficient and effective administration and management of those resources as well as extrabudgetary resources".

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

Replace expected accomplishment (a) with "Increased contribution to the decision-making process by Member States on issues relating to the biennial programme plan, the programme budget and the budgets of the international criminal tribunals and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals".

Indicators of achievement

Replace indicator of achievement (a) (i) with "Increased percentage of reports submitted by the documentation deadlines in order to allow for simultaneous publication in all official languages".

Component 2
Financial services relating to peacekeeping operations

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

Replace expected accomplishment (a) with "Contribute to fully informed decision-making process by Member States on issues relating to peacekeeping".

Indicators of achievement

Replace indicator of achievement (a) with "Increased percentage of budget and budget performance reports submitted by the documentation deadlines in order to allow for simultaneous publication in all official languages".

Component 3
Accounting, contributions and financial reporting

Objective of the Organization

Replace the objective of the Organization with "To further improve the quality of financial statements and client satisfaction with services provided, to secure financing for the expenses of the Organization pursuant to Article 17 of the Charter of the United Nations and to improve the application of related decisions".

Subprogramme 3
Human resources management

Component 1
Policy

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

Replace expected accomplishment (a) with "To enable staff to successfully deliver the mandates of the Organization through improved and modernized human resources policies, programmes and services, including across the United Nations common system".

Indicators of achievement

Insert indicator of achievement (a) (iv), reading: "(iv) Increase in the number of administrative issuances that harmonize policies and practices across the common system and take into consideration the performance measures of Umoja processes".

Component 2
Strategic planning and staffing

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

Replace expected accomplishment (a) with "Improved recruitment, placement and promotion of the best qualified and competent staff, as well as facilitation of greater geographical representation and gender balance of staff".

Indicators of achievement

In indicator of achievement (a) (iv), after "women staff", insert "in the regular budget posts".

Insert a new indicator of achievement, (a) (viii), reading: "(viii) Increased percentage of selected candidates with languages skills, as appropriate."

Paragraph 25.31

Replace subparagraph (a) with "strengthen the new human resources management performance and accountability framework (human resources scorecard)".

Component 3
Learning, development and human resources services

Objective of the Organization

Replace the objective of the Organization with "To promote organizational culture change in the Secretariat in order to address new requirements and needs".

Indicators of achievement

Replace indicator of achievement (a) (i) with "Increased percentage of staff members who are satisfied with the quality and relevance of learning and career support tools and programmes, including language-learning opportunities".

Insert a new indicator of achievement, (b) (ii), reading: "(ii) Increase in the number of language learners who reach proficiency in an official language of the United Nations other than their principal working language". Renumber subsequent indicators of achievement under (b) as (iii), (iv) and (v), respectively.

Component 4
Medical Services

Objective of the Organization

Replace the objective of the Organization with "Reduction of health care-related risks to the United Nations and its staff".

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

Replace expected accomplishment (b) with "Improved quality of United Nations health-care services".

Subprogramme 4
Support services

Component 2
Procurement services

Objective of the Organization

Replace the objective of the Organization with "To ensure efficient, cost-effective, transparent, timely and high-quality procurement".

B. United Nations Office at Geneva

Subprogramme 3
Human resources management (Geneva)

Indicators of achievement

Insert a new indicator of achievement, (a) (ii), reading: "(ii) Increased percentage of candidates selected from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States against posts subject to the system of geographical ranges".

Insert a new indicator of achievement, (a) (iii), reading: "(iii) Increased percentage of female staff in the Professional and higher categories".

Insert a new indicator of achievement, (b) (ii), reading: "(ii) Increase in the number of language learners who reach proficiency in an official language of the United Nations other than their principal working language". Renumber subsequent indicator of achievement as (b) (iii).

Subprogramme 4
1. Support services (Geneva)

Objective of the Organization

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

Add at end of expected accomplishment (a), "in parallel with the implementation phases of the strategic heritage plan".

Indicators of achievement

Insert a new indicator of achievement, (a) (ii), reading: "(ii) Full completion of the relevant implementation phases of the strategic heritage plan". Renumber indicator of achievement (a) as (a) (i).

C. United Nations Office at Vienna

Subprogramme 3
Human resources management (Vienna)

Indicators of achievement

Insert a new indicator of achievement, (b) (ii), reading: "(ii) Increase in the number of language learners who reach proficiency in an official language of the United Nations other than their principal working language". Renumber subsequent indicator of achievement as (b) (iii).

D. United Nations Office at Nairobi

Subprogramme 3
Human resources management (Nairobi)

Indicators of achievement

Insert a new indicator of achievement, (b) (ii), reading: "(ii) Increase in the number of language learners who reach proficiency in an official

language of the United Nations other than their principal working language". Renumber subsequent indicator of achievement as (b) (iii).

Legislative mandates

Overall

General Assembly resolutions

Add:

"70/255 Progress towards an accountability system in the United Nations Secretariat".